"If you do not become like the children"

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Thank you so much for the invitation to this conference and for the possibility to talk to you here!

Some information about myself: I grew up in the German Democratic Republic. For political reasons I was not allowed to finish grammar school with the Abitur (A-levels, highschool dipoma), so I was refused to go to university. That is why I first worked in a medical profession and later on, as a circus artist, and only after the reunification I studied theology and become a priest. I still live on the territory of the former GDR in the state of Sacxony-Anhalt. For the past 15 years I have been working at an institute for further education run by the Protestant Church of Central Germany. My main work consists in promoting religious and pedagogical qualifications of nursery school teachers at church-run kindergartens in Saxony-Anhalt.

There are some particularities that characterize Saxony-Anhalt and the other states in the former German Democratic Republic and which are relevant for this theme.

On the one hand this concerns the role of the kindergartens: The majority of the preschool children in the states of the former GDR spend a big part of their lifetime at nursery schools: 98% of the children at the age of three and more and almost 57% of the children below the age of three go to a kindergarten in Sacxony-Anhalt, 70% spend at least seven hours per weekday in the kindergarten. After the reunification the number of Christian Kindergarten raised up – from 0,2% to 10% in the year 2018 in the Eastern Stats of Germany (Vgl. Comenius-Institut, Ev. Tageseinrichtungen für Kinder, Waxmann 2018).

On the other hand it concerns the cultural and religious context that surrounds the children. Most children grow up in their families and the kindergartens in a world that is culturally homogenous and indifferent concerning religion (about 80% of the population of Saxony-Anhalt is undenominational). The effect of this absence of denominational links in the so-called „new federal states“ is that an inclusive religious education is not in the focus of elementary pedagogical dis-cussions; instead „values“ have entered the center of discussions concerning orientation and identity. This also happens against a background of a hostility against democracy and racism. In Saxony-Anhalt 2% of the inhabitants have a background of migration (In Baden-Württemberg it is 27%), but researches reveal that in Saxony-Anhalt up to 40% agree with statements against foreigners (Decker and Brähler 2008, page 46).

The totalitarianism of de GDR-Government has deeply influenced the mentality of our people: reluctance towards politics, hostility against democracy and prejudice and ignorance concerning religions mark the mentality of a great part of the population in the East-German

states - you have certainly heard about the demonstrations of Pegida in Dresden ore the high resonance to the AFD; this is only the tip of the iceberg.

In such a context Child Theology is of special importance. We speak of a religious illiteracy in the East of Germany. The secularization is so profound that it concerns several generations; people have no experience of practised religiousness. Most East Germans know practised religion only through the media and is full of prejudice towards people who believe. That´s way the Christian Kindergartens are very important, there are like a bridge between the church and the secularized world.

The Christian denomination is to be understood in such a context as a cultural foundation - also in secularized East Germany Christian celebrations structure the year and in nearly every village you find a church and a church-yard. In the heartland of Reformation knowledge like „ecclesia semper reformanda est“ („the church is always to be reformed“) and a solid hermeneutical competence should belong to a basic general education.

More and more the notion of a „religiously sensitive assistance“ is coming through to express an inclusive child-centered religious education as appropriate religious pedagogical didactics in the kindergarten education. A key-concept of eligiously sensitive assistance is that it is not considered as a determined denominational transmission of faith; instead, there is a desire to accompany the children according to their own socialization with different religious experiences and questions.

Child Theology as a „theology with children“ can further the democratization, the participation of the children and the experience of pluralism – in the families, the church, the society. Theologizing confirms the child in finding personal answers concerning their own religious questions and also to perceive different kinds of answers.

Child-Theology

What is child-theology? Witch kind of theology is that? The interpretation of theology is a wide interpretation. One can understand theology literal as the appeal from God to the creation. And, in the second meaning, theology is the answer of the people to this appeal from God. This means every kind of reflection about God and religious questions is theology, not only the academical way. You don’t have to study theology at the university to be a theologian says the movement of Child-Theology.

Child-Theology is a Lay-Theology. And Child-Theology is also a contextual theology, regarding the context of the childhood. And Child-Theology is an international Network, which supports the religious rights of the children as part of the universal children rights. This view on child-theology is especially represented by Sturla Sagberg from Trondheim in Norway.

Sagberg asks: “Are children needed in church? I am not thinking only of tasks to be done on Sundays, but of the role of the child in a church fellowship. (…) Do they get recognition as real contributors?”[1]

[1] Sagberg, S., Taking a children´s rights perspective on children´s spirituality and on church work with children, In: Freudenberger-Lötz, P., Büttner, G. (Hrsg.) Children´s voices, Kassel 2015, 10-25

Child-theology is accepting the childrens views on theological themes as real contribution to theology. It focuses on not only teaching but also listening to the children!

Child-theology is divided in to Theology for, by and with the child. Let´s have a look at the Dimension “theology by the child” before we go to the other Dimensions:

Theology by the child

In the last decades, our „image of the child“ has profoundly changed, especially with regard to early childhood. An important result of research is the understanding that children learn actively from the beginning of their life. They learn by playing and do it in their own personal way, they construct and reconstruct an image of the world. This happens first through the perception of phenomenal structures that then get processed in reflexive thought structures and connected to other areas of knowledge. Thinking during early childhood can be described as a „provisional standpoint“(Perret-Clermont 2013, 219), which is more or less based on reflection.

I would like to explain this point by the development of ideas about death. Laura is 18 months old, her mother has written down the following dialogue:

- Laura sees a fly. She points at the fly and asks: „What's that?“
- The mother answers: „That is a fly.“
- Laura repeats: „Fly!“
- Shortly after that, both go for a walk together.
- Laura notices a bird that is flying away, points at it and shouts: „Fly.“
- The mother is correcting: „No. That is a bird.“
- Laura repeats: „Bird.“
- Once they are at home again Laura discovers a dead fly on the window-sill.
- She points at it and asks with a confused tone of voice: „This? Fly.“
- The mother answers: „That is a dead fly.“
- Laura looks at the fly and touches it thoughtfully.
- Then she runs to her room and calls her mother.
- When she arrives, Laura shows a toy-bird and asks: „This? A dead bird?“

This talk shows how Laura enlarges her vocabulary at the age of 1 ½ years, and is beginning at the same time to appropriate an idea of death. She thinks about the meaning of being dead and shares her thoughts with her mother. In the coming years Laura will reexamine her idea of death and think it over.

- At the age of 28 months Laura is reflecting: „People can die. Can cars also die? How can one see that?“

Can these thoughts already be considered as Child Theology? The question from which point on we can speak explicitly about Child Theology is currently under discussion. Personally, I would not yet consider this given example as Child Theology. Laura does not ask the question why the fly is dead and why people have to die or if it all could happen in a different way. But only these questions enlarge her reflection from an objective level to a reflection on a philosophical and theological level.

Theologizing and philosophizing begins when children go beyond the objective level and ask questions that are meaningful and do not have only one right answer. Often this begins to happen around the age of four. The following example is taken from a conversation in a group of for- and five-year-olds at a kindergarten:

- Eva: Have the people who died become angels?
- Teacher (T): You need not ask me, ask the other children.
- Leni: The people have become stars.
- Sina: What?
- Lenard: Oh no, people have not become stars!
- Max: No!
- T: Eva has asked the question whether people who die have become angels. Leni says that people who die have become stars and Lenard and Max say that they have not become stars.
- Max: They got burned. The body. Only ash remains in the grave.
- T: Yes, that is right. That is what happens with certain people.
- Max: That happened with my grandfather.
- Jana: And this is an urn.
- T: Some people are put into a coffin and others are burnt and the ash gets put into an urn.
- Simon: But the soul cannot die and goes to heaven.
- T: Oh. Could the soul be what Leni means, that which becomes a star, or that which Eva means, that it becomes an angel?
- Children all together: Yes. No. Perhaps.....

Unfortunately the conversation had to be stopped at this crucial moment since the children had already been sitting in the morning circle and wanted to get up now and play. Among the 12 children that took part in the conversation only Eva and Simon come from Christian families. These two children both introduced Christian ideas during the sharing about the next world – the angel and the soul. The other children also expressed their ideas according to their social context. The person that died becomes a star (in the former GDR and even now this is a common explanation for children) or only ashes remains from the deceased.

One factor that is of crucial importance concerning theologizing in kindergarten is that the teachers know how to distinguish between questions to which there is a right answer and questions that are open to discussion - and that they react in an appropriate way. Often the conversations develop spontaneously, starting with children's questions that they ask not always in the morning circle, but also often during the meal, while playing games, when they get dressed, or before midday sleep.

Examples of questions, that the children often ask, are questions about death and the afterlife as well as the question concerning creation and the existence of a supreme power. The following list of questions was written down by a girl herself before she went to bed. She had just turned seven years old. Looking at the spelling in the original you can recognize that a child wrote down her very personal questions:

- Is death forever? If not, what happens after death?
- How many millenniums will there still be?

- Why do I exist?
- Why is it that I am myself?
- Why did it all come into existence: God, the world and everything that surrounds the world?

When I presented these questions during further education for local kindergarten-teachers, the reactions were very ambivalent. Many asked whether the girls had psychological problems. When the teachers were asked, how they would react to these questions, many refered to books for children with scientific explanations. They did not recognise that they misunderstood the questions. But I have also had the experience that teachers said: „These are exactly the questions I ask myself“. The competence to be aware of questions that are meaningful but to which there is no one clear answer is just as important for theologizing as one's own openness to ask such questions.

Theology with the child - A look in the practical aspects

Theologizing in kindergarten takes as its starting point a multidimensional process of reflection.

In the elementary pedagogical area we speak about „wise theologizing“. That means that we take as a starting point a multidimensional notion of reflection that includes an integral-sense-orientated dimension of perceiving and grasping. The methods of wise theologizing are determined by the principle that perceiving, acting and expressing creatively are as important as a dialogue. So a „central place for theologizing is not only the morning talk circle“ (Bederna 2009, 79) but also the workshop, the sandpit, the corner for building and the place for the dolls.

An example: The 3 1/2 year-old Gina, who comes from an atheist home, tells an teacher the following experience:

- Gina: Sometimes he comes down and rings and then I cuddle with him and play with him.
- E: With whom?
- Gina: With God, and his child. Jesus.
- E: You can play with them?
- Gina: With both.
- E: Ok.
- Gina: And then they often come to see me.
- E: They often come to see you? What do they play with you?
- Gina: Always in my dolls' kitchen.
- E: In your dolls' kitchen.

Young children develop their theological ideas not only in a dialogue but first in a game. And when theologizing in a circle, they tend to communicate in more wholistic ways and relate more to their body than older children.

The children of our next example are manly 3 years old. The teacher had read the description of Pentecost in a children's Bible. Then she asked the following questions:

(1) E: How do the people know that Jesus lives and God? Emil?
(2) Emil: Because they are always in Heaven.
(3) Chris starts looking intensely up.
(4) E: They are in Heaven. Only in Heaven?
(5) Bernd: With God, above.
(6) E: Is he always up there?
(7) Hannes also starts looking up. Chris continues looking up and starts singing a silent monotonous chanting.
(8) Jona: We cannot see ourselves.
(9) Bernd: In our dream.
(10) E: Did you hear what Bernd said, where he sees God and Jesus?
(11) Bernd: In our dream we can see God and Jesus.
(12) Anton: Exactly.
(13) Ina: Yes

The children have reflected on the teacher's question in a wholistic way. Chris did not join in with words but through his body posture, and by his chanting one could recognise that he had reflected on the teacher's question just like Bernd.

Theologizing in the kindergarten occurs in common life, in the daily. As a special feature we can underline the importance of theologizing between children.

Theologizing in a kindergarten can spontaneously happen during a shared meal, a walk together or before the nap following lunch, also without the presence of adults. In my own research about theologizing with children in kindergartens 94% of the 109 teachers indicated that children among themselves, without the participation of adults, would theologize. Here a quotation of a teacher: „There was a real discussion between the children. God exists, God does not exist and animals do not go to heaven. Others then responded: Of course, animals go to heaven..... then the children, left alone, argued and discussed."

The following small transcripts are representative of examples that were observed during games by teachers and written down by them:

Anna (3) and Max (5)

- Anna is sitting on a hill outside and is digging a hole like mad.
- Children (and a teacher) arrive and ask what she is doing.
- Anna is explaining: I am digging a very deep hole down to God.
- Max: God is not in the earth. He is in heaven, in the earth is hell.
- The children start discussing.
- Anna: No, he is in the earth, he has the whole world in his hand.
- Other children join in the conversation.

Chris (3) and Bernd (4)

Chris is sitting on the floor, playing a sticking game. He is putting some coloured stickers into the base:

- Chris: „That is a church that God was born in.“ After a short pause he continues to stick other stickers and ads: „Here is one more church. Here another God is being born.“
- Bernd arrives and says: „There is only one God.“
- Chris: „No“.
- Bernd: „At your age.... at my age there is only one God.“

Wise theologizing does not go along with an intentional purpose. A planned „arrangement“ of contents is to be clearly separated from theologizing.

An essential feature of theological talks with children in kindergarten is joining a process during the talk. The teachers facilitating the talk will develop new impulses from the children's impulses – until the talk comes to a provisional end. A determined objective regarding the content can only remain provisional and has to be openly formulated. Teachers that theologize with children in the kindergarten underline the importance of the absence of predetermined objectives concerning the contents and see the aim of theologizing in the process of the conversation itself. I quote from an interview with an kindergarten-teacher.

She emphasizes that while theologizing „the process, not the result, is the objective.“ The most important aim is described by her as „enabling the children to discover answers themselves.“ I continue to quote: „In the process of the conversation the children learn to listen to the others, to find ideas, to develop their vocabulary, to respect the others, and to accept their ideas. It matters to the children that the answers come from them and not from the adults, but from children who are their age or sometimes even younger“.

Wise theologizing in the kindergarten means that the limits between theologizing and philosophizing are open.

Katharina Kammeyer has underlined that the most important characteristic of children's theologizing is that they learn „that it is not a simple "either-or" concerning the idea they have about reality that is right.“ This includes and concerns - maybe above all - the question of truth. When the question „is this really true?“ comes up, then it is one of the tasks of child theology to talk about the pluralism of realities and the different levels of truth (Kammeyer 2011,106). According to Kammeyer, one aim of theologizing (in contrast to philosophizing) is that children „are able to deal with the biblical tradition and theological thinking as part of our cultural memory in an informed way ... and that they are able to say which parts are true for them and also which ones are not“ (Kammeyer 2011, 106). This requires that children do not only consider the Bible as a factual report but that they discover other interpretations. Is this already possible in a kindergarten?

The following extract of a longer talk in a group of children at an kindergarten shows that children are able to arrive at intuitive-symbolic interpretations of biblical stories when they are familiar with a symbolic approach. The for- and five-year- old non-Christian children had been introduced to the Christian background of the celebration of Easter through the use of a Bible for children before the Easter holidays. After the holidays the teacher mentions Easter again. After a talk about Good Friday and the meaning of death the teacher asks the children about their explanations of Easter:

- E: Now you have explained what happens when somebody dies: He is no longer there, you can no longer see him, you cannot talk to him. Why does Mary see Jesus after he has died and put into a grave?
- Josie: You feel him with your heart and you cannot see him.
- Luisa: Yes, in your heart, a strange feeling. Even when I think of Jesus, I hear sad music which I really have.
- Jannek: When he was in Heaven, you cannot see him, but notice him.
- Djamal: Yes, but having the voices kept in your heart surely makes you happy.

Looking at this example, you notice first of all that Luisa mentions her own experiences and her relationship to Jesus. None of the children remain with their explanations at a merely theoretical, abstract level but all relate to the level of feeling ("feel with their heart; strange feeling; not to see, but notice; kept in your heart and happy"). This is also typical of wise theologizing: by doing so, children include their own spirituality and speak about their own experiences.

The bases of Christian theology are no guiding principle for „true“ or „false“ theological interpretations of children.

Especially denominational kindergartens face the challenge to establish new „forms of intercultural and interreligiuos cooperation“ because of the growing number of children coming from non-Christian religions, in order to accompany these children as well and to support them in developing a religious identity (Kollmann 2006, 119). In the „microcosm kindergarten“ children can learn „to cope with pluralism and to become enabled to be pluralistic themselves“ without being overwhelmed by the multitude of differences and without falling into the trap of an uncontrolled integralism“ (same author, 125). According to Kollmann, it is especially in these circumstances that child theology and theologizing with children offers an opportunity” (121).

But of course, if the children never get in contact with religious questions, with faith stories, with prayers and reflections about God then they can´t construct there on Theology. Therefor we need also a theology for the child.

Theology for the child - **The «Gotteskoffer» as an instrument to stimulate child-theology**

Child Theology as „theology for the child“ supports a religious education that is suitable for a child and not dogmatic.
One of the first questions, if we came to a religious theme, is always: Does God exist?

> Mascha (4): Papa? Grandma is old, she still believes in God. Of course, we no longer believe in God. Papa, Does God know that we do not believe in him?

This question leads us to another question: How can we speak appropriate about God? Can we say, as a fact, how, who and where God is? No, because God can be always different. We can only speak that we believe or that that we have the expirience, how, who and where God is. And we can speak, what the Bible tells us about God and we can learn about the way,

how the Bible speaks about God. But also in the Bibel there is not only one theological conception about God, there many different conceptions. And the Bible is teaching us, how to speak appropriate about God: The Bible is using symbols and pictures, these are parables for God. This is the only appropriate way to speak about God, because this makes us clear: If we speak about God, there are always our interpretations.

> In the tv-news says a muslim: Allah is the only real God. Johanna (7 years old) react: You can not know that. Nobody knows what God is like. Maybe there are many Gods? We only know that because our parents told us. We do not know everything and neither do they. We can only believe what we got from our parents.

How can we speak appropriate about God? 15 years ago I developed a Symbol – God - Box to help the religious sensitive conversation process with children and even adults about God. It contains 40 different symbols out of 40 bible verses about God. This Symbol – God - Box is nowadays widely used in different churches and countries. Not only by people with religious background like catechists and priests but also by people without a religious background. Those different users find the Symbol – God - Box very useful for religious pedagogical work.

Three basic rules have to be followed while packing your own Symbol-God-Box.

Um sich selbst einen Symbolkoffer zu packen, sind drei Grundsätze zu beachten:

- We need always a diversity of symbols to show the diversity of God.
- Symbols can always have several meanings. We use symbols with ambivalent character to show this.
- We use symbols, which are toys, because they should invite to play with them. We start with our own experiences and ideas to the objects, only afterwards we thematise the symbolic meaning in relation to God.

Does God live in a church? - Example of a movie

Preliminary remarks

Now I would like to show you a short movie which shows an extract of a sharing circle in a kindergarten. Some information about the situation: children in their last year of this kindergarten are not required to lie down for a nap after lunch. While the other children are sleeping, all these children gather in a group and have a program of their own. They play, go on an excursion, make music, and listen to stories. After a visit to a church a child asks: Does God lives in the church? So the teacher promised that they would take some time to reflect together about this exciting question. Some days later she invited the children to search for answers concerning this question during the break after lunch. Only two children out of eight are growing up in a Christian family. The teacher has taken part in the religious qualifications at my institute, but this was the first explicit theologizing in a group of children.

5.2 Transcription

(1) B: Oh well. And do you know that some people say, God is living in the church.

(2) Elisa: Yes.
(3) B: How are you all feeling about this?
(4) Elisa: So God is living in the church.
(5) B: Anni, do you have another opinion to my question?
(6) Anni: I don't think so.
(7) B: You think, God isn't living in a church? Then where is he living, what do you think?
(8) Anni: In our hearts.
(9) B: In our hearts. Yes. Is there another question or does someone of you want to comment on that, what Anne said. Julia.
(10) Julia: Actually God is living in heaven.
(11) B: And from where do you know that?
(12) Julia: I think it was in the Bible-story.
(13) B: You think, he is in the heaven. And Julian?
(14) Julian: Well, actually in my church. Whenever I go into my church, there is always God there.
(15) B: Yes?
(16) Julian: Yes, I see him always there and than there is a large cross (shows it) and, I find that somehow cool, and there is another man.
(17) B: Who is this?
(18) Julian: That is God.
(19) Children: That is Jesus.
(20) Julian: That' s the golden one, but he is small. He is fixed on the cross.
(21) Children: Jesus.
(22) B: Well, is that Jesus?
(23) Julian: Yes.
(24) B: How do you know that God is there?
(25) Julian: Because I saw him somehow in my church.
(26) B: Really? And where is he? Can you describe him to us, we have not been in your church.
(27) Julian: He was in a stair, here is, there is at first such a soft stair. Somehow I know now ... and than he goes up and than there is this hard thing, this wooden piece and there are many candles on it.
(28) Julia: I've been there too.
(29) Julian: And there is another thing, something big. And two animals, no I mean four and you can always go into it and look. And there are steps and you can go up and then you can see the other one, who is up there.
(30) B: And who is it, up there?
(31) Julian: This is the God, who is always going there. You know that can only the God do.
(32) B: What can only the God do?
(33) Julian: Only he is allowed to go up the stairs and look around afterwards. Somehow go up ... to show it to the others, you know the God.
(34) B: Have you seen him too?

(35) Julian: Yes.
(36) B: And how does he look like?
(37) Julian: Well he has, he has black clothes and a .... and ... Do you know what he did sometimes.
(38) B: No.
(39) Julian: He did blood, here and here and there was a round thing that you don't know somehow and then they put blood into it and afterwards they drink it.
(40) B: Yes, that is whine or juice which represents blood but isn't real blood. Yes. They pretend it is blood but it is only juice.
(41) Elisa: Apple juice.
(42) B: No, that is grape juice or sometimes wine, that differs.
(43) Elisa: Yes.
(44) Julian: But normally it is wine.
(45) B: Yes. So you have already attended it too. Yes? A communion it is called.
(46) Julian: And with me he did this (puts his hand on his head).
(47) Anni: Some people have searched God out there, although he is all ... only, only in our heart.
(48) B: Where did you hear that God was searched out there.
(49) Anni: My mom has read it in a book and one day, during our drive to my speech therapist, she told me all that.
(50) B: Yes, and did they find him? Do you know how the search ended?
(51) Anni: No, because, because God is actually always only in our hearts.
(52) B: Do you think the same way or was this written in that book too.
(53) Anni: That was written in my moms book too, because mama told me.
(54) B: Ah yes, and what do you believe?
(55) Anni: The same.
(56) Observation: Arthur does not say anything, but is sitting probably 10 min with his hands pressed to his heart.
(57) B: Mischa, what did you want to say?
(58) Mischa: There are certainly only very, very many Gods. Hundred.
(59) B: How do you know?
(60) Mischa: You have told us that here in the morning circle. A hundred names, hundred Gods.
(61) B: No that is something you misunderstood. "The hundredth name of God", that was something like nicknames. For instance, how does your mom sometimes call you?
(62) Mischa: Mama told me, there are many many Gods.
(63) Luise: I believe, God is living in the heart and in heaven.
(64) B: Well, and how does he do that?
(65) Luise: Mhm.
(66) B: Do you have an idea how he looks like?
(67) Luise: (head shaking)
(68) B: No?

(69) B: Julia.

(70) Julia: So a white robe and brown hair.

(71) B: Oh and this is a man or a woman?

(72) Julia: (Laughing) A man, otherwise he wouldn't be called God or Jesus.

(73) B: How else?

(74) Julia: Then he would have some girls' names.

(75) Mischa: I believe, God is living in heaven, because when we sang and played in the morning, there was this morning prayer: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name and at the beginning was Our Father in heaven and not in the heart. (...) But I myself think he is in the heart.

(76) B: Oh?

(77) Mischa: I myself think too, that he is in the heart.

(78) B: Oh yes, that you'd think to yourself.

(79) Armin: I just wanted to say, I think I know how he looks like: I believe he looks like all of us.

(80) B: Like all of us? God looks like all of us? Yes?

(81) Armin: Yes ... and even with the same hair, with the thousand heads …

(82) Doris: I believe that God certainly is in heaven. Because I rather believe that he is in heaven. And everybody has another liking. Everybody knows we don't know where he is. I believe he is in heaven.

(83) B: And why do you assume that?

(84) Doris: I don't know.

(85) B: You don't know now, you just think so.

(86) Doris: Yes.

(87) Lena: I believe, God is living in the heart and if the mouth is opened he will fly out again.

(88) B: Well, and there does he fly to?

(89) Lena: To heaven.

(90) B: Oh. Does he return sometimes again?

(91) Lena: I don't know.

(92) Franz: Probably when everything is over.

(93) Julian: Actually there is one, actually there is a God, actually he is really existing somewhere in a world, where all a God is by the hundred names ...

(94) Elisa: I think there are two Gods, one heart God and one heaven God.

(95) B: Oh. You think there are two of him.

(96) Someone: Yes there are.

Summary

Julian confounds the pastor with God. Having learned in the talk that this is wrong, he seems quite confused at the end.

Mischa has misunderstood the story about the hundredth name of God. First he does not like to be corrected, but then changes his theory. Coming from a family that is distant to religion he can only refer to information, he has heard at the kindergarten. The talk leads to him having his own opinion: „I reflected on my own in my heart!“.

Anna keeps her theory that God is only in one's heart. For Anna, this theory has the same significance as a general truth – she considers other positions as being false. She refers to her mother and to books her mother has read. „I want to say that some people have been looking for God outside, even though he is only, only in our hearts.“

Arthur does not say anything: But he is thinking about Annas hypothesis, you can see it: He is sitting with his hands pressed to his heart.

Armin is thinking concretely: If God looks like all of us, he has thousand heads. He is laughing about this idea, because he imagine this hypothesis concretely.

Doris contradicts Anna but makes it clear that she is aware of the fact that this question does not only lead to one truth. „Everybody has got a different taste – everybody knows that we do not know where he is. I believe he is in heaven.“

Lena try a synthesis between God in heart an in the heaven: “I believe, God is living in the heart and if the mouth is opened he will fly out again.”

Elisa does not really care about the talk – she would like to do something else. From time to time she asks if they could go back to playing. Her statements „So God lives in the church“ and „I think, God, there are two Gods, one God in the heart and one God in heaven.“ Knowing the context, I doubt whether these are her own thoughts.

This small extract from a movie makes clear:

- that children in the kindergarten have discovered very different contents in the kindergarten morning circles and develop many very diverse ideas of God,
- the social field influences the children sometimes more and sometimes less (it is interesting that no child of that group doubts the existence of God),
- by sharing with other children they are encouraged to reflect on their hypothesis (Lena and Julia – they try a synthesis of God in the heart and God in Heaven),
- that some children are open to changing their theory (Mischa) but others not (Anni: God is always only in the heart).
- that children often live with misunderstandings because of a lack of opportunities to speak about their ideas (Julian: the pastor is God),
- and that children can be confused by such a talk (Julian), untouched (Elisa), confirmed (Anna), encouraged to appropriate (Mischa) or can be stimulated to a reflected positioning with a consciousness of certainty (Doris).

During a parents' evening the parents were shown the entire, uncut movie (25 minutes) as well as a second movie about the talk refering to the question who the right father of Jesus is. The parents, mostly non-denominational, were very impressed and started theologizing.

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